Are your programmable systems backed up?

Introduction

With evermore programmable controllers and smart inverter drives complete with advanced operating programs what happens when such equipment fails?

Implications

If during equipment failure, a back up copy of the program is is not held, then the cost of utilising a programmer to recreate the original operating philosophy will far outweigh the cost of the replacement equipment. Depending on the complexity of the system, this could also take a long time and add to an already expensive and potentially unsafe period of downtime.

In conclusion

It is advisable to have and maintain version controlled copies of all user programs for programmable logic controllers and drives. In the event of a failure, an upload can normally be completed to the replacement controller in a relatively straightforward fashion. In the case of a failed controller being obsolete, if the original program is available, then a simple conversion or manual rewrite can normally be done costing significantly less than fully re-programming from scratch.

Sometimes the company who did the original programming may be willing to provide a copy of the program to assist during equipment failure. A common occurrence is that the original company no longer holds the file, are no longer trading or are unwilling to provide it.

For older equipment, especially over 10 years of age and in harsh environments, contingencies need to be in place for when it will fail.

Kind regards,

AMEA Services